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ABSTRACT

This document describes the competency-based teacher education program developed as a joint effort between Glassboro State College and the Camden City School System in a Teacher Corps project. The following competencies for elementary teachers, developed for the project, are listed and described: a) competence in instructional skills, b) competence in learning theory, c) competence in materials and programs, and d) competence in establishing a positive school environment. The competencies are taught through the use of module clusters; the design of module clusters is described. (JA)

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Competency-Based Teacher Education

A Beginning

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In an effort to improve teacher education, Glassboro State College has joined with the Camden City School System in a Teacher Corps project. The project will enable Glassboro State College and Camden City to design and test innovative educational concepts.

Thirty-five interns are assigned to the Bonsall Elementary School. Here the interns will complete the last two years of their teacher training. Their internship emphasizes an individually guided program of college studies within a field-oriented, competency-based framework.

From Glassboro State College's point of view Competency-Based Teacher Education represents the most dramatic change involved in the Teacher Corps project. Rather than certify teachers just on the basis of courses completed, Glassboro State College is being asked to state specifically what competencies teacher should have and then teach those competencies. If Glassboro State College is able to establish a complete and valid list of competencies and train teachers in these competencies, future education graduates should be excellent teachers.

The first list of competencies for elementary teachers has been developed by members of the Glassboro State College Elementary Education Department. The list represents the core competencies and is intended to be representative of a behavioral approach to teaching. These competencies comprise the nucleus of Glassboro's teacher education program.

When the list of competencies is used in a training program it will be supplemented by competencies specific to school districts and teacher trainees in those districts. The total package will represent a teacher education program specifically designed for individual school districts. The Glassboro State College list of core competencies is given below.

A List of Teacher Competencies

(A Working Document)
September, 1972

The following list of teacher competencies is based on the assumption that the ultimate test of effective teaching is pupil learning. If desired pupil learning does not take place, the effectiveness of teaching is questionable.

A second assumption is that the environment in which the teaching-learning process takes place is important. Pupil learning should occur within an environment that promotes a desire to attend school and participate in its offerings. The environment should be one in which pupils actively contribute and are rewarded for their efforts.

Within the framework above, a list of teacher competencies has been developed. The competencies have been grouped into several areas and a rationale provided for each area.

The list of competencies is intended to be tentative and will change as input is received from research, practical experience, and individuals interested in teaching education.

I. Competence in Instructional Skills

Teachers should be able to design a sequence of learning activities for individual pupils. They should be able to arrange for pupil involvement with the planned activities. The result of pupil involvement with the learning activities should be the desired learning on the part of the pupil. With regard to instructional skills the teachers should be able to do the following:

A. Establish long term objectives for pupils.

B. Establish short term objectives which are consistent with the long term objectives.

C. Select materials and procedures which are consistent with the established objectives.

D. Apply the teaching plans for individual pupils.

E. Maintain continuous measurement of pupil progress.

F. Modify materials and/or procedures if data indicates changes are needed.

II. Competence in Learning Theory

Teachers should be familiar with one or more theories of learning. It is assumed that decisions guided by theories that have been supported by practice and research are preferable to personal, subjective decisions. Teachers should be aware that theories are continuously subject to change. With regard to theories of learning, teachers should be able to do the following:

A. State the major points of a theory of learning.

B. Design teaching strategies that reflect the systematic use of a particular learning theory.

C. Apply the teaching strategies.

D. Collect data to indicate the effect of the systematically applied learning theory principles.

III. Competence in Materials and Programs

A vast amount of materials are available for classroom use.

Teachers are being given increased responsibility in the choice and use of materials. At times these materials are organized into complete programs in particular subject areas. In choosing materials and programs teachers should be able to do the following:

A. List several resource materials available for classroom use in every basic elementary subject area.

B. Classify materials as applicable to group and/or individualized use.

C. Adapt pre-packaged materials for situation-specific use.

D. Describe several major programs and their advantages in the basic elementary subject areas.

IV. Competence in Establishing a Positive School Environment

Teachers should develop a positive classroom environment. The environment will include a sensitive relationship between teacher and pupils. Rewards available in the environment should be determined in terms of pupil perspective. In order to establish a positive environment the teacher should be able to do the following:

A. Identify expressed pupil needs.

B. State and translate language pupils use in informal settings.

C. Identify reinforcers for individual pupils.

D. Apply reinforcers for pupil achievement.

E. Observe pupils in free time situations and list individual pupil activities in order of frequency-of-occurence.

The core competency list provides the Glassboro State College instructional team with a standard for evaluating course content. Content itself is determined by individual instructors or teams but it must prepare the teachers in the listed competencies. For example, the first competency listed under Competency In Instructional Skills concerns the ability of the teacher trainee to establish long term objectives for pupils. The instructor of the Glassboro State College Science Methods Course is free to stress his particular teaching methods and elaborate on familiar science programs but must prepare the trainee for the core competencies.

Competencies are taught through the use of module clusters. The cluster is essentially a detailed outline of the course which is given to the student when the course begins. Instructional objectives are specified in each module within the cluster allowing the trainee to know specifically in what he must be competent. Each module also contains information on pre-assessment procedures, instructional activities, and post-assessment procedures. The trainee may test out of one or all of the modules. If he cannot test out, he is free to proceed at his own pace. An example of a science module is given below.

TSES - 001.02 (GSC) Inventorying Science Materials

Objective

The student will be able to inventory and record on the appropriate forms the science programs and materials in a classroom and identify the program and materials consistent with module TSES - 001.01 (GSC).

Prerequisite

TSES - 001.01 (GSC)

Pre-Assessment

Pre-assessment procedures consist of an informal interview of the student by his instructor who would determine the student's level of competence relevant to the objective.

Instructional Activities

1. Obtain Inventory Form from instructor and receive instruction on its use.

Post-Assessment

Post-assessment procedures consist of alternate forms of the pre-assessment.

Remediation

No remediation activities have been predetermined. These would be decided upon by the student in consort with his faculty advisor and/or team leader.

Three types of evaluative criteria are contained in the modules: knowledge, teaching behavior, and product (pupil behavior change) criteria. The third criteria is considered the highest standard but is only acceptable if the classroom environment is also judged to be adequate.

Since the Glassboro State College Teacher Corps Program is completely field-based during the academic year and instruction is given on site, evaluation or competence is thorough. Traditional oral and written tests are used to judge knowledge competencies. Classroom observation using informal and formal (Flanders, video-tapes, frequency-of-occurence measures) observational techniques are used. Most important the interns are continuously in a long term teaching situation so that product measures can be obtained.

The Glassboro State College Teacher Corps Program is based on a consistent behavioral approach to teaching. The modular teaching format should insure the basic "Competency" of the interns. Pupils

of the interns will provide the data to support or refute the validity of the competencies developed by Glassboro State College.

About The College

Located in South Jersey, Glassboro State College is just 20 miles southeast of Philadelphia and Camden. Twenty-five buildings fill the 200 acres of this co-educational college, which has 6,000 full-time and 6,000 part-time students.

GSC offers bachelor's degrees in 3 major areas: professional studies, arts and sciences and fine and performing arts.

In professional studies we offer teaching degrees in areas ranging from elementary through high school.

You can major in one of 15 programs in the arts and sciences, including communications, journalism, law/justice, political science, chemistry and administrative studies (accounting, marketing, management).

In fine and performing arts we offer degrees in art, music and speech and theatre.

GSC also offers an M.A. degree in 20 areas of teacher education.